

Community Food Project Grant
October 2014 Update- First Year Complete!

UC Cooperative Extension has continued to work with local schools to increase their understanding of local and seasonal produce. The Harvest of the Month program is continuing this school year at Shandon and starting at Nipomo Elementary School. Nipomo had their first assembly tasting on September 19th and sampled bell peppers and heirloom tomatoes donated by Talley Farms, and enjoyed tasting butternut squash on October 17th. The Shandon Elementary School program is starting October 22nd, and they children will be sampling chard and kale. The HOTM program is expected to have over 900 student program participants during just this school year, exceeding their overall grant goal of 820 students.

The PhotoVoice program (where every month ten students submit a poem, story, or drawing to express their culinary experience with a Harvest of the Month produce item) is continuing at Oceano Elementary School.

UCCE has hired a Cal Poly student intern to coordinate development of a food tasting and demonstration program at Salvation Army food distribution sites. The nutrition education events are scheduled to begin in October of 2014.

Lastly, UCCE also continued to host their food preservation workshops. On September 27th the newly launched Master Food Preserver program hosted an applesauce workshop with apples donated by GleanSLO..

SLO Public Health has hosted workshops on food safety and new food laws for 112 County residents, in both Spanish and English. They have already met 93 percent of their three-year goal! They have started to include discussion of the Cottage Food Law in their presentations, providing the low-income participants with information on how to start their own food related business.

In July, **Central Coast Grown** hosted the first Food Hub Working Group meeting, and have met monthly since then. There are currently 6-10 people in the working group, with various roles in the food system. The group, which will meet for two years, has begun research and orienting themselves with the local food system.

Two institutions, one of which is the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District, have committed to working with Central Coast Grown to increase farm-to-school efforts in SLO County. To assist institutions in their efforts to local procurement, CCG has developed a farmer directory, and will continue to expand it through this year.

CCG is still finding it challenging to calculate a baseline of local procurement, but have received help from local purchasing directors and The Berry Man. They hope that with these new relationships they will be able to gain a better understanding of local procurement in SLO County.

SLO Food Bank and Glean SLO harvested 206,079 pounds of produce in the first year of the grant, exceeding the goal for Year 1 (140,000 lbs) and year 2 (200,000 lbs)! Although they were able to surpass their goal, they have seen a decline in available produce to glean due to the drought, finding that farmers are not as willing to donate a high value crop, or have stopped irrigating completely and are losing their crops. The drought has had a dramatic impact on their work.

Although poundage harvested has decreased, support and interest from the local community has grown. GleanSLO has increased the number of backyard harvests, which increases their presence in the community and the amount of donated produce, while also requiring less oversight because the gleans are organized by volunteers. GleanSLO staff's focus has been directed to enhancing infrastructure to boost high yield farmers' market gleans and build capacity for large scale commercial farm gleans.